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by Bob "Dr. Mac" LeVitus

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About the Author

Bob LeVitus, often referred to as "Dr. Mac," has written or co-written more than 50 popular computer books, including *iPhone For Dummies, GarageBand For Dummies,* and *Dr. Mac: The OS X Files* for Wiley Publishing, Inc.; *Stupid Mac Tricks* and *Dr. Macintosh* for Addison-Wesley; and *The Little iTunes Book* and *The Little iDVD Book* for Peachpit Press. His books have sold more than a million copies worldwide.

Bob has penned the popular Dr. Mac column for the *Houston Chronicle* for the past ten years and has been published in dozens of computer magazines over the past 15 years. His achievements have been documented in major media around the world. (Yes, that was him juggling a keyboard in *USA Today* a few years back!)

Bob is known for his expertise, trademark humorous style, and ability to translate techie jargon into usable and fun advice for regular folks. Bob is also a prolific public speaker, presenting more than 100 Macworld Expo training sessions in the U.S. and abroad, keynote addresses in three countries, and Macintosh training seminars in many U.S. cities. (He also won the Macworld Expo MacJeopardy World Championship three times before retiring his crown.)

Bob is considered one of the world's leading authorities on Mac OS X. From 1989 to 1997, he was a contributing editor/columnist for *MacUser* magazine, writing the Help Folder, Beating the System, Personal Best, and Game Room columns at various times.

In his copious spare time, Bob heads up a team of expert technical consultants who do nothing but provide technical help and training to Mac users via telephone, e-mail, and/or a unique Internet-enabled remote control software, which allows the team to see and control your Mac no matter where in the world you may be.

If you're having problems with your Mac, you ought to give them a try. You'll find them at `www.boblevitus.com` or 408-627-7577.

Prior to giving his life over to computers, LeVitus spent years at Kresser/Craig/D.I.K. (a Los Angeles advertising agency and marketing consultancy) and its subsidiary, L & J Research. He holds a B.S. in Marketing from California State University.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my wife, Lisa, who taught me almost everything I know about almost everything I know except computers. It's also dedicated to my children, Allison and Jacob, who love their Macs almost as much as I love them (my kids, not their Macs).

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And finally, thanks to you, gentle reader, for buying this book.

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Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

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Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Part 1: Introducing Mac OS X Snow Leopard: The Basics 7

Chapter 1: Mac OS X Snow Leopard 101 (Prerequisites: None) 9

Gnawing to the Core of OS X 10
A Safety Net for the Absolute Beginner (Or Any User) 12
Turning the dang thing on 12
What you should see on startup 12
Shutting down properly 16
A few things you should definitely NOT do with your Mac 17
Point-and-click boot camp 18
Not Just a Beatles Movie: Help and the Help Menu 19

Chapter 2: The Desktop and Windows and Menus (Oh My)! 23

Touring the Finder and Its Desktop 24
Anatomy of a Window 26
Top o' the window to ya! 28
A scroll new world 29
(Hyper) Active windows 30
Dialog Dealie-Boppers 31
Working with Windows 33
Opening and closing windows 33
Resizing windows 34
Resizing window panes 34
Moving windows 34
Shuffling windows 35
Menu Basics 37
The ever-changing menu bar 37
Contextual menus: They're sooo sensitive 38
Recognizing disabled options 40
Navigating submenus 40
Underneath the Apple menu tree 41
Using keyboard shortcut commands 42

Chapter 3: Have It Your Way 45

Introducing System Preferences 45
Putting a Picture on the Desktop 48

Setting Up a Screen Saver 50
Putting Widgets on the Dashboard 52
Giving Buttons, Menus, and Windows a Makeover 56
Spaced Out! Defining Screen Spaces 59
Adjusting the Keyboard, Mouse, Trackpad, and Other Hardware 63
Styling Your Sound 71
Changing sound effects 71
Choosing output options 72
Choosing input options 72

Chapter 4: What's Up, Dock? 73

A Quick Introduction to Using the Dock 73
The default icons of the Dock 74
Trash talkin' 77
Opening application menus in the Dock 78
Reading Dock-icon body language 80
Opening files from the Dock 81
Customizing the Dock 81
Adding Dock icons 82
Removing an icon from the Dock 84
Resizing the Dock 84
What should you put in YOUR Dock? 85
Setting your Dock preferences 86

Chapter 5: The Finder and Its Icons 91

Introducing the Finder and Your Desktop 91
Getting to Know the Finder Menu 94
Navigating the Finder: Up, Down, and Backward 96
Belly up to the toolbar 96
Moving through folders fast in Column view 99
Perusing in Icon view 101
Listless? Try touring folders in List view 102
You gotta go with the flow 104
Like a road map: The current folder's pop-up menu 104
Going places with the Go menu 106
Customizing the Finder Window 107
Adding folders to the Sidebar 108
Setting Finder preferences 108
On using View Options 111
Customizing the Finder with Folder Actions 116
Knowing Thy Finder Icons 117
Aliases: Greatest Thing Since Sliced Bread 119
Creating aliases 120
Deleting aliases 121
Hunting down an alias's parent 122
Digging for Icon Data in the Info Window 122

Part II: Snow Leopard Taming (Or "Organization for Smart People") 127

Chapter 6: Organizing and Managing Files and Folders 129

Understanding the Mac OS X Folder Structure 130
Understanding nested folders 131
From the top: The Computer folder 132
Peeking into the Applications folder 133
Finding fonts (and more) in the public Library folder 133
Let it be: The System folder 134
The usability of the Users folder 134
There's no place like Home 135
Your personal Library card 137
Saving Your Document Before It's Too Late 138
Stepping through a basic Save 139
Looks like Save, acts like Save — why's it called Save As? 144
Open Sez Me 146
With a Quick Look 148
With drag-and-drop 149
When your Mac can't open a file 149
With the application of your choice 151
Organizing Your Stuff in Folders 152
Files versus folders 152
Organizing your stuff with subfolders 153
Creating new folders 156
Navigating with spring-loaded folders 156
Smart Folders 157
Shuffling Around Files and Folders 160
Comprehending the Clipboard 160
Copying files and folders 161
Pasting from the Clipboard 162
Moving files and folders 163
Selecting multiple icons 164
Playing the icon name game: Renaming icons 166
Compressing files 167
Getting rid of icons 167
Finding Your Stuff, Fast 168
The Search box in Finder Windows 168
Using the Spotlight menu 170

Chapter 7: Dealing with Disks 173

Comprehending Disks 173
Some disks need to be formatted first 174
Moving and copying disk icons 175

Surprise: Your PC Disks Work, Too! 176
Burning CDs and DVDs 176
Burning on the fly 178
Creating a Burn Folder 181
Getting Disks out of Your Mac 182

Chapter 8: Organizing Your Life 185

Keeping Track with iCal 186
Navigating iCal views 186
Creating calendars 187
Grouping calendars 188
Deleting a calendar or group 189
In any event 190
To do or not to do 192
Are You Available? 193
Stickies 193
iSync 194

Part III: Do Unto Snow Leopard: Getting Things Done 197

Chapter 9: Internet-Working 199

Getting Connected to the Internet 200
Setting up your modem 200
Your Internet service provider and you 201
Plugging in your Internet connection settings 202
Starting a MobileMe account 203
Browsing the Web with Safari 204
Navigating with the toolbar buttons 206
Bookmarking your favorite pages 207
Using the terrific Top Sites page 209
Simplifying surfing with RSS feeds 210
Searching with Google 212
Checking out Help Center 214
Communicating via iChat 214
Chit-chatting with iChat 214
Chatting with audio and video 216
Remote Screen Sharing 217

Chapter 10: E-Mail Made Easy 221

Keeping Contacts Handy with Address Book 221
Adding contacts 222
Importing contacts from other programs 224
Creating a basic group 224

Setting up a Smart Group (based on contact criteria) ... 226
Sending e-mail to a contact or group ... 227
Sending and Receiving E-Mail with Mail ... 228
Setting up Mail ... 228
Composing a new message ... 229
A quick overview of the toolbar ... 231
Working with stationery ... 232
Checking your mail ... 234
Dealing with spam ... 234
Changing your preferences ... 235
Mail rules rule ... 236
Mailboxes smart and plain ... 237
Sign here, please ... 239
Take a (Quick) look and (Slide) show me some photos ... 241

Chapter 11: The Musical Mac ... 243

Introducing iTunes ... 243
Working with Media ... 246
Adding songs ... 246
Adding movies and videos ... 248
Adding podcasts ... 249
Listening to Internet radio ... 250
All About Playlists ... 251
Creating a regular playlist ... 252
Working with smart playlists ... 253
Burning a playlist to CD ... 254
Looking at two specific playlists ... 254
Backing Up Your iTunes Media ... 257

Chapter 12: The Multimedia Mac ... 259

Watching Movies with DVD Player ... 259
Playing Movies and Music in QuickTime Player ... 262
Viewing and Converting Images and PDFs in Preview ... 263
Entertaining with Front Row ... 264
Importing Media ... 266

Chapter 13: Words and Letters ... 271

Processing Words with TextEdit ... 271
Creating and composing a document ... 272
Working with text ... 273
Adding graphics to documents ... 275
Font Mania ... 277
Installing new fonts ... 278
Types of fonts ... 278
Managing your fonts with Font Book ... 279

Part IV: Making This Snow Leopard Your Very Own..... 281

Chapter 14: Publish or Perish: The Fail-Safe Guide to Printing. 283

Before Diving In 283
Ready: Connecting and Adding Your Printer 284
Connecting your printer 284
Setting up a printer for the first time 285
One last thing: Printer sharing 288
Set: Setting Up Your Document with Page Setup 289
Print: Printing with the Print Sheet 290
Printing a document 291
Choosing among different printers 292
Choosing custom settings 292
Saving custom settings 295
Preview and PDF Options 295
Just the Fax 297

Chapter 15: Sharing Your Mac and Liking It 299

Introducing Networks and File Sharing 300
Portrait of home-office networking 301
Three ways to build a network 302
Setting Up File Sharing 304
Access and Permissions: Who Can Do What 305
Users and groups and guests 306
Creating users 308
Mac OS X knows best: Folders shared by default 315
Sharing a folder or disk by setting permissions 316
Useful settings for permissions 320
Unsharing a folder 322
Connecting to a Shared Disk or Folder on a Remote Mac 323
Changing Your Password 326
Changing your account password on your Mac 327
Changing the password of any account but your own on your Mac 327
Changing the password for your account on someone else's Mac 328
Five More Types of Sharing 329
Printer Sharing 329
Internet Sharing 329
Web Sharing 330
Bluetooth Sharing 331
Screen Sharing 333

Chapter 16: Features for the Way You Work 335

Talking and Listening to Your Mac 335
Talking to your Mac 336
Listening to your Mac read for you 340

Automatic Automation....342
AppleScript....343
Automator....344
A Few More Useful Goodies....347
Universal Access....347
Energy Saver....350
Bluetooth....351
Ink....351
Automatic Login (Accounts System Preferences pane)....352
Boot Camp....352

Part V: The Care and Feeding of Your Snow Leopard ... 355

Chapter 17: Safety First: Backups and Other Security Issues 357

Backing Up Is (Not) Hard to Do....358
Backing up with Snow Leopard's excellent Time Machine....358
Backing up by using the manual, brute-force method....361
Backing up by using commercial backup software....362
Why You Need Two Sets of Backups....363
Non-Backup Security Concerns....364
All about viruses....364
Firewall: Yea or nay?....366
Install recommended software updates....368
Protecting Your Data from Prying Eyes....369
Blocking or limiting connections....369
Locking down files with FileVault....369
Setting other options for security....370

Chapter 18: Utility Chest 373

Calculator....373
Activity Monitor....374
AirPort Utility....376
Audio MIDI Setup....376
ColorSync Utility....376
DigitalColor Meter....377
Disk Utility....377
First Aid....378
Erase....378
Partition....378
RAID....378
Restore....379
Grab....380
Grapher....380
Java Preferences....381
Keychain Access....381
Migration Assistant....382
System Profiler....383
Terminal....383

Chapter 19: Troubleshooting Mac OS X 385

The Ol' "My Mac Won't Boot" Blues 385
The ultimate startup disk: The Mac OS X installation DVD 386
Booting from a DVD-ROM 388
Question Mark and the Mysterians 390
Step 1: Run First Aid 391
Step 2: Safe Boot into Safe Mode 393
Step 3: Zapping the PRAM 394
Step 4: Reinstalling Mac OS X 395
Step 5: Take your Mac in for repair 395
If Your Mac Crashes at Startup 396

Part VI: The Part of Tens 397

Chapter 20: Almost Ten Ways to Speed Up Your Mac Experience 399

Chapter 21: Ten Ways to Make Your Mac Better by Throwing Money at It 407

Chapter 22: Ten (Or So) Great Web Sites for Mac Freaks 413

Appendix: Installing or Reinstalling Mac OS X Snow Leopard (Only If You Have To) 421

Index 427

Introduction

You made the right choice twice: Mac OS X Snow Leopard and this book.

Take a deep breath and get ready to have a rollicking good time. That's right. This is a computer book, but it's going to be fun. What a concept! Whether you're brand spanking new to the Mac or a grizzled old Mac vet, I guarantee that reading this book to discover the ins and outs of Mac OS X Snow Leopard will make everything easier. Wiley, Inc. (the publisher of this book) couldn't say as much on the cover if it weren't true!

About This Book

This book's roots lie with my international bestseller *Macintosh System 7.5 For Dummies,* an award-winning book so good that now-deceased Mac cloner Power Computing gave away a copy with every Mac clone it sold. *Mac OS X Snow Leopard For Dummies* is the latest revision and has been, once again, completely updated to include all the Mac OS X goodness found in Snow Leopard. In other words, this edition combines all the old, familiar features of previous editions — but is once again updated to reflect the latest and greatest offering from Apple as well as feedback from readers.

Why write a *For Dummies* book about Snow Leopard? Well, Snow Leopard is a big, somewhat complicated, personal-computer operating system. So I made *Mac OS X Snow Leopard For Dummies* a not-so-big, not-very-complicated book that shows you what Snow Leopard is all about without boring you to tears, confusing you, or poking you with sharp objects.

In fact, I think you'll be so darned comfortable that I wanted the title to be *Mac OS X Snow Leopard Without Discomfort,* but the publishers wouldn't let me. Apparently, we *For Dummies* authors have to follow some rules, and using *Dummies* and *Mac OS X Snow Leopard* in this book's title are among them.

And speaking of *"dummies,"* remember that it's just a word. I don't think you're dumb — quite the opposite! My second choice for this book's title was *Mac OS X Snow Leopard For People Smart Enough to Know They Need Help with It,* but you can just imagine what Wiley thought of that. ("C'mon, that's the whole point of the name!" they insisted. "Besides, it's shorter our way.")

Anyway, the book is chock-full of information and advice, explaining everything you need to know about Mac OS X in language you can understand — along with timesaving tips, tricks, techniques, and step-by-step instructions, all served up in generous quantities.

What You Won't Find in This Book

Another rule we *For Dummies* authors must follow is that our books cannot exceed a certain number of pages. (Brevity is the soul of wit, and all that.) So I wish I could have included some things, but they didn't fit. Although I feel confident you'll find everything you need to know about Mac OS X Snow Leopard in this book, some things bear further looking into, including these:

- **Information about some of the applications (programs) that come with Mac OS X Snow Leopard:** An installation of Mac OS X Snow Leopard includes more than 50 separate applications, mostly found in the Applications folder and the Utilities folder within it. I'd love to walk you through each one of them, but that would have required a book a whole lot bigger, heavier, and more expensive than this one.

  This book is, first and foremost, about using Mac OS X, so I brief you on the small handful of bundled applications essential to using Mac OS X Snow Leopard and keep the focus there — namely, iCal, Address Book, Mail, Safari, TextEdit, and the like, as well as important utilities you may need to know how to use someday.

  For what it's worth, many books cover the applications that come with Mac OS X Snow Leopard as well as applications commonly bundled with Snow Leopard on a new Mac, such as iLife; the one my publisher suggested I recommend is *Mac OS X Snow Leopard All-in-One For Dummies,* written by Mark L. Chambers, which is (by sheer coincidence, of course) also published by Wiley.

- **Information about Microsoft Office, iLife, iWork, Adobe Photoshop, Quicken, and most other third-party applications:** Okay, if all the gory details of all the bundled (read: *free*) Mac OS X Snow Leopard applications don't fit here, I think you'll understand why digging into third-party applications that cost extra was out of the question.

- **Information about programming for the Mac:** This book is about *using* Mac OS X Snow Leopard, not writing code for it. Dozens of books cover programming on the Mac, most of which are two or three times the size of this book.

  For what it's worth, Dennis Cohen, my technical editor, and his brother Michael wrote a great book about Xcode 3, the development environment included with Mac OS X Snow Leopard. It's called *The Xcode 3 Book* and, by sheer coincidence, is also published by (who else?) Wiley.

Conventions Used in This Book

To get the most out of this book, you need to know how I do things and why. Here are a few conventions I use in this book to make your life easier:

- When I want you to open an item in a menu, I write something like "Choose File⇨Open," which means, "Pull down the File menu and choose the Open command."
- Stuff you're supposed to type appears in bold type, **like this.**
- **Sometimes an entire a sentence is in boldface, as you see when I present a numbered list of steps. In those cases, I leave the bold off what you're supposed to type,** like this.
- Web addresses, programming code (not much in this book), and things that appear on-screen are shown in a special monofont typeface, `like this`.
- For keyboard shortcuts, I write something like ⌘+A, which means to hold down the ⌘ key (the one with the little pretzel and/or symbol on it) and then press the A key on the keyboard. If you see something like ⌘+Shift+A, that means to hold down the ⌘ and Shift keys while pressing the A key. Again, for absolute clarity, I never refer to the ⌘ key with the symbol. I reserve that symbol for the menu (Apple menu). For the Command key, I use only the ⌘ symbol. Got it? Very cool.

Foolish Assumptions

Although I know what happens when you make assumptions, I've made a few anyway. First, I assume that you, gentle reader, know nothing about using Mac OS X — beyond knowing what a Mac is, that you want to use OS X, that you want to understand OS X without having to digest an incomprehensible technical manual, and that you made the right choice by selecting this particular book.

And so I do my best to explain each new concept in full and loving detail. Maybe that's foolish, but . . . oh well.

Oh, and I also assume that you can read. If you can't, ignore this paragraph.

How This Book Is Organized

Mac OS X Snow Leopard For Dummies is divided into six logical parts, numbered (surprisingly enough) 1 through 6. By no fault of mine, they're numbered using those stuffy old Roman numerals, so you see I–VI where you (in my humble opinion) ought to see Arabic numbers 1–6. It's another rule that *For Dummies* authors have to follow, I think.

Anyway, it's better if you read the parts in order, but if you already know a lot — or think you know a lot — feel free to skip around and read the parts that interest you most.

Part I: Introducing Mac OS X Snow Leopard: The Basics: This first part is very, very basic training. From the mouse to the Desktop, from menus, windows, and icons to the snazzy-but-helpful Dock, it's all here. A lot of what you need to know to navigate the depths of Mac OS X safely (and sanely) and perform basic tasks can be found in this part. And although old-timers might just want to skim through it, newcomers should probably read every word. Twice.

Part II: Snow Leopard Taming (Or "Organization for Smart People"): In this part, I build on the basics of Part I and really get you revving with your Mac. Here, I cover additional topics that every Mac user needs to know, coupled with some hands-on, step-by-step instructions. The part starts with a closer look at ways you can organize your files and folders, followed by a chapter about using removable media (which means *ejectable discs* — mostly CDs and DVDs). Last, but certainly not least, is a chapter about all the Snow Leopard applications (such as iCal, Address Book, and Mail) that help you keep your digital life organized.

Part III: Do Unto Snow Leopard: Getting Things Done: This part is chock-full of ways to do productive stuff with your Mac. In this section, you discover the Internet first — or at least how to get it working on your Mac and what to do with it after you do. Next, you look at the digital-media side of things with chapters about music, video, games, and digital photos. Finally, you look at Snow Leopard's built-in tools for writing — namely, TextEdit and fonts.

Part IV: Making This Snow Leopard Your Very Own: Here I get into the nitty-gritty underbelly of making Mac OS X Snow Leopard work the way you want it to work. I start with the ins and outs of printing under OS X. Then I move on to somewhat more advanced topics, such as file sharing, creating and using multiple user accounts (and why you might want to), and the lowdown on numerous Mac OS X Snow Leopard features — Text to Speech, speech recognition, automation, and more — that can make your computing experience even more pleasant.

Part V: The Care and Feeding of Your Snow Leopard: This part starts with a chapter about backups and security, which not only stresses the importance of backing up your data, but also shows you how to do it almost painlessly. Then I introduce you to a handful of useful utilities included with Snow Leopard, and explain when and how to use them. Finally, I tell you how to avoid most disasters, as well as what to do in the unlikely event that a major mishap does occur.

Part VI: The Part of Tens: Finally, it's The Part of Tens, which might have started life as a Letterman rip-off, but does include heaping helpings of tips, optional software, great Mac Web sites, and hardware ideas.

Appendix: Last, but certainly not least, I cover installing Mac OS X Snow Leopard in the appendix. The whole process has become quite easy with this version of the system software, but if you have to install Snow Leopard yourself, it would behoove you to read this helpful appendix first.

Icons Used in This Book

Little round pictures (icons) appear off to the left side of the text throughout this book. Consider these icons miniature road signs, telling you a little something extra about the topic at hand. Here's what the different icons look like and what they all mean.

Look for Tip icons to find the juiciest morsels: shortcuts, tips, and undocumented secrets about Snow Leopard. Try them all; impress your friends!

When you see this icon, it means that this particular morsel is something that I think you should memorize (or at least write on your shirt cuff).

Put on your propeller-beanie hat and pocket protector; these parts include the truly geeky stuff. It's certainly not required reading, but it must be interesting or informative, or I wouldn't have wasted your time with it.

Read these notes very, very, very carefully. (Did I say *very?*) Warning icons flag important cautionary information. The author and publisher won't be responsible if your Mac explodes or spews flaming parts because you ignored a Warning icon. Just kidding. Macs don't explode or spew (with the exception of a few choice PowerBook 5300s, which won't run Snow Leopard anyway). But I got your attention, didn't I? I'll tell you once again: It is a good idea to read the Warning icons *very carefully*.

These icons represent my ranting or raving about something that either bugs me or makes me smile. When I'm ranting, imagine foam coming from my mouth. Rants are required to be irreverent, irrelevant, or both. I try to keep them short, more for your sake than mine.

Well, now, what could this icon possibly be about? Named by famous editorial consultant Mr. Obvious, this icon highlights all things new and different in Mac OS X Snow Leopard.

Where to Go from Here

Go to a comfortable spot (preferably not far from a Mac) and read the book.

The first few chapters of this book are where I describe the basic everyday things that you need to understand to operate your Mac effectively. If you're new to Macs and OS X Snow Leopard, start there.

Even though Mac OS X Snow Leopard is way different from previous Mac operating systems, the first part of the book is so basic that if you've been using a Mac for long, you might think you know it all — and okay, you might know most of it. But hey! Not-so-old-timers need a solid foundation. So here's my advice: Skip the stuff you know; you'll get to the better stuff faster.

I didn't write this book for myself. I wrote it for you — and would love to hear how it worked for you. So please send me your thoughts, platitudes, likes and dislikes, and any other comments. You can send snail-mail in care of Wiley, but it takes a long time to reach me that way, and I just don't have time to respond to 99.9% of it. If you want a response your best bet is to send e-mail to me directly at `SnowLeopard4Dummies@boblevitus.com`. I appreciate your feedback, and I *try* to respond to all reasonably polite e-mail within a few days.

Did this book work for you? What did you like? What didn't you like? What questions were unanswered? Did you want to know more about something? Did you want to find out less about something? Tell me! I have received more than 100 suggestions about previous editions, most of which are incorporated here. So keep up the good work!

So what are you waiting for? Go — enjoy the book!

Part I

Introducing Mac OS X Snow Leopard: The Basics

The 5th Wave By Rich Tennant

"The odd thing is he always insists on using the latest version of MAC OS."

In this part . . .

Because I believe it's important to crawl before you walk, in this part you get a look at the most basic of basics — such as how to turn on your Mac. Next, I acquaint you with the Mac OS X Finder, with its Desktop, windows, icons, and menus (oh my)! Then you find out how to make this cat your own by customizing your work environment to suit your style. After that is a date with the Dock. And last but certainly not least, you discover some additional tasks that will make life with Snow Leopard ever so much easier.

So get comfortable, roll up your sleeves, fire up your Mac if you like, and settle down with Part I, a delightful little section I like to think of as "The Hassle-Free Way to Get Started with Mac OS X Snow Leopard."

Chapter 1

Mac OS X Snow Leopard 101 (Prerequisites: None)

In This Chapter

- Understanding what an operating system is and is not
- Turning on your Mac
- Getting to know the startup process
- Turning off your Mac
- Avoiding major Mac mistakes
- Pointing, clicking, dragging, and other uses for your mouse
- Getting help from your Mac

Congratulate yourself on choosing Mac OS X, which stands for Macintosh Operating System X — that's the Roman numeral *ten,* not the letter *X* (pronounced *ten,* not *ex*). You made a smart move because you scored more than just an operating-system upgrade. Mac OS X Snow Leopard includes several new features to make using your Mac easier, and dozens of improvements that help you do more work in less time.

In this chapter, I start at the very beginning and talk about Mac OS X in mostly abstract terms; then I move on to explain what you need to know to use Mac OS X Snow Leopard successfully.

If you've been using Mac OS X for a while, some of the information in this chapter might seem hauntingly familiar; some features that I describe haven't changed from earlier versions of Mac OS X. But if you decide to skip this chapter because you think you have all the new stuff figured out, I assure you that you'll miss at least a couple of things that Apple didn't bother to tell you (as if you read every word in Mac OS X Help, the only user manual Apple provides, anyway!).

Tantalized? Let's rock.

If you're about to upgrade to Snow Leopard from an earlier version of Mac OS X, I feel obliged to mention a major pitfall to avoid: One very specific misplaced click, done while installing your new OS, *could erase every file on your hard drive.* The appendix describes this situation in full and loving detail, and it contains other important information about installing Snow Leopard that can make upgrading a more pleasant experience.

Gnawing to the Core of OS X

The operating system (that is, the *OS* in *Mac OS X*) is what makes a Mac a Mac. Without it, your Mac is a pile of silicon and circuits — no smarter than a toaster.

"So what does an operating system do?" you ask. Good question. The short answer is that an *operating system* controls the basic and most important functions of your computer. In the case of Mac OS X and your Mac, the operating system

- Manages memory
- Controls how windows, icons, and menus work
- Keeps track of files
- Manages networking
- Does housekeeping (No kidding!)

Other forms of software, such as word processors and Web browsers, rely on the operating system to create and maintain the environment in which they work their magic. When you create a memo, for example, the word processor provides the tools for you to type and format the information. In the background, the operating system is the muscle for the word processor, performing crucial functions such as the following:

- Providing the mechanism for drawing and moving the on-screen window in which you write the memo
- Keeping track of a file when you save it
- Helping the word processor create drop-down menus and dialogs for you to interact with
- Communicating with other programs
- And much, much more (stuff that only geeks could care about)

So, armed with a little background in operating systems, take a gander at the next section before you do anything else with your Mac.

One last thing: As I mention in the introduction (I'm only repeating it here in case you normally don't read introductions), Mac OS X Snow Leopard comes with more than 50 applications. And though I'd love to tell you all about each and every one, I have only so many pages at my disposal. If you need more info on the programs I don't cover, may I (again) recommend *Mac OS X Snow Leopard All-in-One For Dummies,* written by Mark L. Chambers; *iLife All-in-One For Dummies,* written by my old friends Tony Bove and Cheryl Rhodes; or *iMovie & iDVD '09 For Dummies* by the technical editor of this very book, Dennis Cohen, and his brother Michael (all three titles are from Wiley).

The Mac advantage

Most of the world's personal computers use Microsoft Windows. But you're among the lucky few to have a computer with an operating system that's intuitive, easy to use, and (dare I say?) fun. If you don't believe me, try using Windows for a day or two. Go ahead. You probably won't suffer any permanent damage. In fact, you'll really begin to appreciate how good you have it. Feel free to hug your Mac. Or give it a peck on the disc-drive slot — just try not to get your tongue caught.

As someone once told me, "Claiming that the Macintosh is inferior to Windows because most people use Windows is like saying that all other restaurants serve food that's inferior to McDonald's."

We might be a minority, but Mac users have the best, most stable, most modern all-purpose operating system in the world, and here's why: UNIX — on which Mac OS X is based — is widely regarded as the best industrial-strength operating system on the planet. For now, just know that being based on UNIX means that a Mac running OS X will crash less often than an older Mac or a Windows machine, which means less downtime. And being UNIX-based also means far fewer viruses and malicious software. But perhaps the biggest advantage OS X has is that when an application crashes, it doesn't crash your entire computer, and you don't have to restart the whole computer to continue working.

By the way, with the advent of Intel-powered Macs a few years ago, you can now run Windows natively. That's right — you can now install and run Microsoft Windows on any Mac powered by an Intel processor, as described in Chapter 16.

Don't let that UNIX stuff scare you. It's there if you want it, but if you don't want it or don't care (like most of us), you'll rarely even know it's there. All you'll know is that your Mac just runs and runs and runs without crashing and crashing and crashing.

A Safety Net for the Absolute Beginner (Or Any User)

In the following sections, I deal with the stuff that the manual that came with your Mac doesn't cover — or doesn't cover in nearly enough detail. If you're a first-time Macintosh user, please, *please* read this section of the book carefully — it could save your life. Okay, okay, perhaps I'm being overly dramatic. What I mean to say is that reading this section could save your *Mac.* Even if you're an experienced Mac user, you might want to read this section anyway. Chances are good that you'll see at least a few things you might have forgotten that might come in handy.

Turning the dang thing on

Okay. This is the big moment — turning on your Mac! Gaze at it longingly first and say something cheesy, such as "You're the most awesome computer I've ever known." If that doesn't turn on your Mac (and it probably won't), keep reading.

Apple, in its infinite wisdom, has manufactured Macs with power buttons on every conceivable surface: on the front, side, and back of the computer itself, and even on the keyboard or monitor.

So if you don't know how to turn on your Mac, don't feel bad — just look in the manual or booklet that came with your Mac. It's at least one thing that the documentation *always* covers.

These days, most Macs have a power-on button near the keyboard (notebooks) or the back side (iMacs). It usually looks like the little circle thingie you see in the margin.

Don't bother choosing Help➪Mac Help, which opens the Help Viewer program, because it can't tell you where the switch is. Although the Help program is good for finding out a lot of things, the location of the power switch isn't among them. Of course, if you haven't found the switch and turned on the Mac, you can't access Help anyway. (D'oh!)

What you should see on startup

When you finally do turn on your Macintosh, you set in motion a sophisticated and complex series of events that culminates in the loading of Mac OS X and the appearance of the Mac OS X Desktop. After a small bit of whirring,

buzzing, and flashing (meaning that the operating system is loading), OS X first tests all your hardware — slots, ports, disks, random-access memory (RAM), and so on. If everything passes, you hear a pleasing musical tone and see the tasteful gray Apple logo in the middle of your screen, along with a small spinning-pinwheel cursor somewhere on the screen. Both are shown in Figure 1-1.

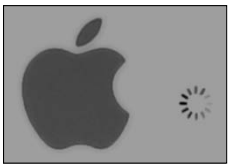

Figure 1-1: This is what you'll see if everything is fine and dandy when you turn your Mac on.

Here are the things that might happen when you power up your Mac:

- **Everything is fine and dandy:** Next, you might or might not see the Mac OS X login screen, where you enter your name and password. If you do, press Return or Enter (after you type your name and password, of course), and away you go.

  If you don't want to have to type your name and password every time you start or restart your Mac (or even if you do), check out Chapter 16 for the scoop on how to turn the login screen on or off.

  Either way, the Desktop soon materializes before your eyes. If you haven't customized, configured, or tinkered with your Desktop, it should look pretty much like Figure 1-2. Now is a good time to take a moment for positive thoughts about the person who convinced you that you wanted a Mac. That person was right!

- **Blue/black/gray screen of death:** If any of your hardware fails when it's tested, you might see a blue, black, or gray screen.

  Some older Macs played the sound of a horrible car wreck instead of the chimes, complete with crying tires and busting glass. It was exceptionally unnerving, which might be why Apple doesn't use it anymore.

  The fact that something went wrong is no reflection on your prowess as a Macintosh user. Something is broken, and your Mac may need repairs. If this is happening to you right now, check out Chapter 19 to try to get your Mac well again.

Figure 1-2: The Mac OS X Desktop after a brand-spanking-new installation of OS X.

If your computer is under warranty, dial 1-800-SOS-APPL, and a customer-service person can tell you what to do. Before you do anything, though, skip ahead to Chapter 19. It's entirely possible that one of the suggestions there can get you back on track without your having to spend even a moment on hold.

- **Prohibitory sign (formerly known as the flashing-question-mark disk):** Most users eventually encounter the prohibitory sign shown in the left margin (which replaced the flashing question-mark-on-a-disk icon and flashing folder icon back in Mac OS X Jaguar). This icon means your Mac can't find a startup disk, hard drive, network server, or DVD-ROM containing a valid Macintosh operating system. See Chapter 19 for ways you can try to ease your Mac's ills.
- **Kernel panic:** You shouldn't see this very often, but you might occasionally see a block of text in four languages, including English, as shown in Figure 1-3. This means that your Mac has experienced a *kernel panic,* the most severe type of system crash. If you restart your Mac and see this message again, look in Chapter 19 for a myriad of possible cures for all kinds of ailments, including this one.